



## UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 8  
999 18<sup>TH</sup> STREET - SUITE 300  
DENVER, CO 80202-2466  
Phone 800-227-8917  
<http://www.epa.gov/region08>

### INITIAL POLLUTION REPORT Sterling Gasoline Spill

#### I. HEADING

Date: 6/23/98  
Subject: Sterling Gasoline Spill  
OSC Name: Duc Nguyen  
Agency: EPA  
Region VIII  
Emergency Response Program  
999 18th Street, Suite 500  
Denver, Colorado 80202  
(303) 312-6509  
Party Conducting the Action: Responsible Party  
Federal Project # (FPN): 088169  
POLREP No.: Initial

#### II. BACKGROUND

Response Authority: Oil Pollution Act  
NPL Status: Non-NPL  
Start Date: 5/22/98  
Complete: N/A

#### III. INCIDENT INFORMATION

A. Incident Category: Classic Emergency, OPA Action

##### B. Site Description

###### 1. Site Description

The Sterling Gasoline Spill site is located near 403 West Main Street within the city limits of Sterling, Colorado. The ground slopes gently toward the



southeast. A storm sewer, consisting of a 10 inch diameter ceramic pipe, carries surface water runoff approximately 1.75 miles to the South Platte River.

## 2. Incident or Release

On May 20, 1998, at approximately 1600 hours, a fully loaded Bradley Petroleum gasoline transport was preparing to back into the Sav-O Mat gas station at 403 West Main, when a catastrophic failure of the emergency valve occurred. Approximately 2,500 gallons of gasoline flowed from the trailer north on the east side of 4th Avenue. Most of the gasoline is believed to have entered the storm sewer at the southwest corner of the West Main Street - 3rd Avenue intersection. Initially, responding agencies included the Sterling Police Department, Sterling Fire Department, and the Colorado Highway Patrol Hazardous Materials Unit. Western Cleanup, Inc. of Fort Morgan, Colorado, responded on behalf of Bradley Petroleum.

Immediate actions included:

- Down gradient storm sewers were checked for the presence of gasoline vapor;
- A plug was placed in the storm sewer nearest the incident scene that did not contain gasoline vapor. This was determined to be on 5th Street between Main Street and Poplar Street;
- Main Street was blocked to prevent cars from causing a spark and igniting the vapor;
- Businesses and homes fronting Main Street along a five-block extent were evacuated and closed for eight hours; and
- The City and PRP Contractor dumped several loads of dirt on the pooled gasoline near the incident, which adsorbed the gasoline.

Later the PRP Contractor loaded 58 cubic yards of contaminated soil and stockpiled it at its yard for sampling and disposal.

### C. Preliminary Assessment Results

A Region VIII OSC, accompanied by the Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team (START), traveled to the Site on May 22, 1998. The Responsible Party Contractor was flushing the affected storm sewer pipe with a water/biosolve mixture. Approximately 4,000 gallons had been pumped into the storm sewer and 4,600 gallons of liquid recovered. Including gasoline recovered with the soil, approximately 600 - 1,000 gallons of gasoline had been recovered.

In spite of the sewer line being plugged, a slight sheen of gasoline appeared at the storm sewer outfall into the South Platte River during EPA's visit. The sewer pipe is reportedly old and may leak. Groundwater is believed to be 8-10 feet below ground surface. Gasoline may have traveled in the pea gravel outside the sewer line over a portion of the distance prior to entering the river. The OSC directed the RP contractor to deploy booms in the river to collect the gasoline sheen and prevent its discharge. In addition, Photoionization Detector (PID) readings of up to 300 parts per million (ppm) were recorded in the storm sewer. Because of the threat of explosion, the OSC directed the RP contractor to mobilize a blower to the site and provide continuous ventilation to the sewer in the area of the storm sewer plug.

## IV. Response Information

### A. Status of Actions

On June 4, 1998, the OSC returned to the Site where the RP contractor provided an update of site activities. The contractor had recently performed a geoprobe subsurface soil investigation to identify the magnitude and extent of gasoline contamination. Soil cores were collected in and around the spill area and along the storm sewer path. As a result of the geoprobe investigation, the RP contractor had excavated contaminated soils in the area of the spill.

No release of gasoline into the river was observed

during this trip. The blower was in operation at the location previously specified by the OSC.

The OSC has procured \$10,000 for the Site through the Oil Pollution Fund.

**B. Planned Response Actions**

Pending approval by a permitted landfill to accept gasoline contaminated soil, the RP contractor plans to excavate additional contaminated soil under cracked concrete in the area of the spill beginning the week of June 22, 1998. Later, free product/soil vapor recovery wells are planned for the most heavily contaminated areas along the storm sewer line within the Main Street turning lane as determined by the geoprobe investigation.

**C. Next Steps**

The EPA will remain the lead agency overseeing cleanup activities. EPA will check with City of Sterling and Colorado Highway Patrol Hazardous Material Unit personnel on the cleanup status and to offer assistance when appropriate.

**D. Key Issues**

None to report.

**E. Cost Information**

**Estimated Cost To Date:**

EPA	\$ 2,000
START	\$ 2,000
TOTAL	\$ 4,000
Ceiling	\$10,000

FCD: July 8, 1998, D.Nguyen, mgs,  
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